

September, 2021

VOICES



Recovery Month Edition

Community Events

Walk a Mile

Join Community Mental Health Authority (CEI) and the Community Mental Health Association of Michigan (CMHAM) for the Walk a Mile Rally.



DATE: Wednesday, September 29th **LOCATION:** State Capital Building
WHO: Anyone is able to participate in the walk

DETAILS: Why We Walk:

- To enhance public awareness and remind legislators that Mental Health Matters.
- To end the stigma related to mental illness & developmental disabilities.
- To encourage equality between mental health & physical health care coverage.
- To promote whole health wellness, and show that our voices can make a difference.

TIMELINE:

- 12:30pm to 1:00pm: Advocacy Walk around the Capital Building
- 12:30pm to 1:30pm: Check-In Tent and pick up giveaways
- 1:30pm to 3:00pm: Rally Begins, includes speakers and statements

For more information:

- For information and to view the WAM packet, please visit: <https://cmham.org/education-events/walk-a-mile-rally/>
- For additional questions, please call Customer Services at 517-346-8244.

More Events

- American Foundation for Suicide Prevention Out of the Darkness Walk: September 26th from 1pm to 3pm in Adado Park, Lansing
Link: <https://supporting.afsp.org>
- NamiWalks Your Way Grand Rapids: October 2nd from 8am to 12pm at Davenport University - 6191 Kraft Ave. Grand Rapids.
Link: www.namiwalks.org

Need Help?



Do you have any questions or need help accessing any part of this newsletter? Contact Customer Service at 517-346-8244 or customerservice@ceicmh.org

Writing Submissions



We are still taking submissions for our Writer Spotlight! Do you have a story that you think could be shared in a future issue of this newsletter?

Make submissions to Customer Service at 517-346-8244 or customerservice@ceicmh.org

For news and information from CMHA-CEI, visit our website at www.ceicmh.org and Facebook page at www.facebook.com/CEICMH.

Highlighting Recovery Stories during Recovery Month: Wes's Story

"I had all of the tools when I left and I did great", stated Wes. "I ended up having marital issues when I got out, but that was all an excuse. I didn't have to pick up the drink, but I did. Reaching for alcohol was an impulsive move".

After successfully completing the substance use 90-day treatment program, Wes is back at the House of Commons (HOC). Wes's story is a perfect example that recovery is not easy if there are no boundaries set, if an individual doesn't change their environment, and if the tools that are learned in recovery are not practiced daily.



Wes and Quenton Lerma, House of Commons Program Coordinator, Integrated Treatment & Recovery Services sit outside of the House of Commons.

"That's why residential is such an important part in recovery to some of these individual's in this building, but what happens is, you practice it here, in a controlled environment. There are limited stressors", explained Quenton Lerma, House of Commons Program Coordinator, Integrated Treatment & Recovery Services. "You are not going to the gas station to pump gas and be tempted to buy cold beer at the cash register where you could impulsively buy it. We do not have that here. It's sober, it's not hostile, and you don't have any of those things to worry about. What happens is that everyone here is given all of these tools to stay sober, but when people leave, they do not continue to practice the tools that they are given at the House of Commons (HOC)".

Wes's drug of choice is alcohol. "From seeing my parents drink a lot, when I was 15 years old, I thought that I would test the waters myself. Not that I ever wanted to be like my dad and be an abusive alcoholic, but I thought that I would try it. Growing up in the 60's and 70's it's just something that people did. I took my first sip of vodka and I liked the way that it made me feel. I have tried cocaine and pot, but never liked the feeling of those drugs". Alcohol was always readily available to Wes. At the age of 16 and 17 years old, Wes had a friend, whose dad owned a bar. So, Wes and his friends would hang out at the bar, play pool, and throw horseshoes. Wes was just having fun, but after a while and his first DUI later, alcohol was no longer fun but a necessity.

In his mid-20's, Wes explains that his binges would increase to drinking pints of alcohol a day. His drinking was spiraling out of control, to a point where he was blacking out and his friends would have to explain to him what happened the night before. "All of my friends that I was around were drinking. It wasn't just the jocks that would drink at the football games. I had a lot of friends that were busy getting their careers started, but I was too busy getting into fights, getting DUI's, and just thinking that I was having some fun". After getting multiple DUIs in the 80's, Wes has not had a driver's license since then due to his drinking.

Wes was known as a "closet drinker". Working in construction, Wes would go to houses that he was working on to drink in private. While all of his friends would go to the bars, Wes would be sneaking alcohol now and then where no one would judge him, or suspect that he had a drinking problem.

Recovery Month Stories: Wes is Hopefully During His 2nd Stay at HOC

Even with his wife of 20 years, Wes has tried to stay sober to be the supportive partner in his marriage. "Alcohol just turns me into a "Dr. Jackal and Hyde" situation. My wife does not like who I become when I start to drink", stated Wes.

When asked if alcohol has had any impact on his health, Wes explains, "my doctor has told me that I am very fortunate not to suffer from any health related issues do to my drinking".

Over time, excessive alcohol use can lead to development of chronic diseases and other serious problems including: high blood pressure, heart disease, stroke, liver disease, and digestive problems. With the staggering data of the negative consequences that alcohol can have on a person's health, alcohol can have negatively impact a person's life in other ways. "By the grace of god, throughout my life I have never killed anyone by drinking or driving", states Wes.

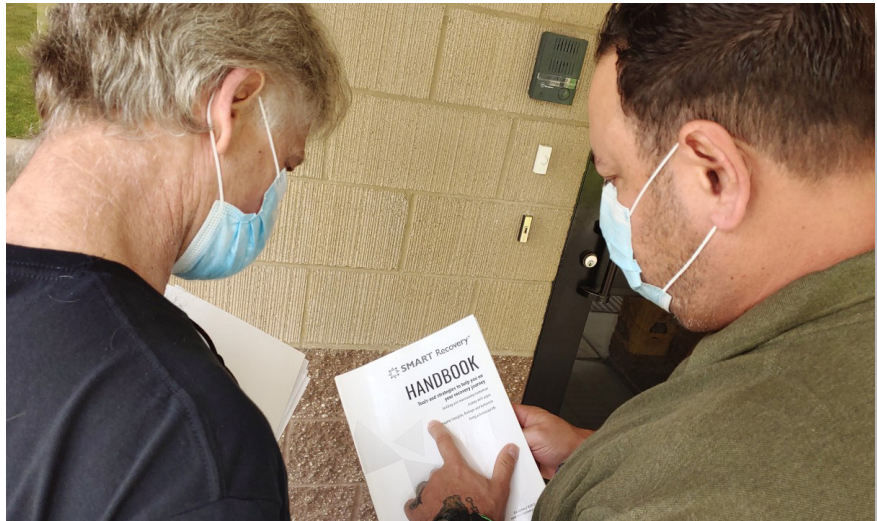
When asked what his favorite class or program is at HOC, Wes mentioned Moral Reconciliation Therapy (MRT), also known as the Pyramid of Life.

MRT is a type of behavioral therapy aimed at decreasing the likelihood of someone returning to abusing substances or alcohol. The purpose of the MRT steps is to help you take control of yourself and become the person you should be. It is a systematic method of restructuring your personality. The personality stages are described in each step because they help in understanding others and themselves. During group sessions, individuals are to provide verbal testimonies and give an honest assessment of themselves and their problems. This type of therapy also gives others a chance to listen and to challenge members of the group to be truthful.

Currently, Wes is waiting to be sentenced by a judge. Wes had recognized that he needed the extra help after relapsing on alcohol, and had requested that the judge place him back into HOC for the 90-day substance use treatment program. "I just got here on Friday", explained Wes. "What I need to do differently this time around is to worry about the person in mirror and not anyone else". Wes has maintained several positive habits to help him get through these next three months. "I wake up every day, pray, and take inventory. I try to be mindful and have a plan for when I am released and if I am not sentenced to prison".

We wish Wes the very best in his recovery and during his second stay at HOC.

Many people around the world have taken up alcohol as a way to cope with the stressors of the COVID-19 Pandemic. According to the JAMA Network, there was a 54% increase in national sales of alcohol in 2020 and a 200% increase in online sales. The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMSHA) have listed a couple ways to monitor your own drinking habits and to know when to take control if you are noticing an increase in online sales.



Recovery Month Stories: Taking One Day at a Time

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMSHA) have listed a couple ways to monitor your own drinking habits and to know when to take control if you are noticing an increase in alcohol consumption.

- Set a daily and weekly drinking limit
- Write down your limit
- Pace your drinking
- Have no more than one standard drink per hour
- Record how much you drink daily
- Avoid situations and triggers that cause you to drink
- Ask a friend who does not drink to help you stay within your limit
- And speak with your doctor and/or seek treatment for your alcohol use



Community Mental Health Authority of Clinton, Eaton, and Ingham Counties will be featuring four stories during Recovery Month in September. To learn more about Community Mental Health Authority and the House of Commons, please visit www.ceicmh.org to learn more.

If you or someone you know is suffering from a Substance Use Disorder or a behavioral health crisis, please give us a call at 517-346-8460 to access our crisis services. To learn more about our programs and services, please give us a call at 517-346-8318.